



## After a Winter Storm

### General Advice

- Always use caution when entering a building damaged by high winds and/or snow. Look out for broken glass.
- Use flashlights—not lanterns, candles, or matches—to check buildings containing natural gas, propane, or gasoline.
- Report downed power lines and broken gas lines immediately.
- After blizzards, heavy snows, or extreme cold, check to see that no physical damage has occurred and that water pipes are functioning. If there are no other problems, wait for streets and roads to be opened before you attempt to drive anywhere.
- Check on neighbors, especially any who might need help.
- Beware of overexertion and exhaustion. Shoveling snow in extreme cold causes many heart attacks. Set your priorities and pace yourself after any disaster that leaves you with a mess to clean up. The natural tendency is to do too much too soon.



### Shoveling Snow

If you go out to shovel snow, do a few stretching exercises to warm up your body. Also remember to take frequent breaks.

The correct way to shovel snow is:

- ① Bend the knees instead of the waist. Lift with the leg muscles, not the back.
- ② Grip the shovel with one hand low, near the blade, to get better leverage. Keep the shovel close to the body to avoid reaching.
- ③ Do not overreach. Move the feet along as you move to keep from bending the waist too much or leaning over too far.
- ④ Move your feet as you turn to throw the snow, to reduce the torsion on the back, which can pinch spinal nerves.
- ⑤ Limit shoveling to 15 or 20 minutes at a time. Repetitive motion tires the back muscles faster. Take breaks to stand up straight or do backbends to ease the back muscles.

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Adapted by UF/IFAS from:  
*Winter Preparedness Safety Tips*, Federal Emergency Management Agency; and  
*Cutting in Cold Weather*, Oregon Cutting Systems



## Cutting in Cold Weather

After a winter storm, some people may decide to use a chainsaw to cut dangling tree branches or to divide large fallen branches into smaller sections. Unfortunately, chainsaw accidents also increase at this time, particularly among novice users. Be absolutely sure to thoroughly read the operator's manual supplied with your chain saw.

Cutting in cold conditions, in snow, and in frozen wood can cause rapid wear and possible breakage of the saw chain. Following the steps below to keep cold-weather wear to a minimum.

- ① **OIL**—Use a lighter weight of bar-chain oil, or dilute bar-chain oil 25 percent with clean kerosene or diesel oil. Use twice as much of this diluted oil during operation, and be certain your chain is receiving oil from the saw.
- ② **TENSION**—Keep your chain correctly tensioned. Check and adjust often.
- ③ **CUTTERS**—Keep cutters sharp. Touch up every hour, or more often if needed. Do not force dull chain to cut!
- ④ **DEPTH GAUGES**—The bite of cutters is regulated by the height of the leading portion of each cutter, commonly known as the depth gauge. Check and adjust your cutter's depth gauges at every sharpening.
- ⑤ **BAR**—Keep the bar groove clean and oil holes open. Turn symmetrical bars over to equalize rail wear.
- ⑥ **DRIVE SPROCKET**—Replace the sprocket after every two chains, or sooner if wear is evident.

## Snow Thrower Safety

Here are some important recommendations from the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute on the use of snow throwers:

**“Never allow anyone in front of your snow thrower.”**

- Read your owner’s manual thoroughly and understand all of the recommended safety procedures before turning on your snow thrower.
- Never allow children to operate equipment.
- Keep the operation clear of all people and pets.
- The snow can sometimes hide objects that might clog the chute, or otherwise cause damage. You should clear the area of doormats, sleds, boards, wires, and other debris.
- Be careful never to throw snow towards people or cars, and never allow anyone in front of your snow thrower.
- If you have to repair your machine, remove an object, or unclog built up snow from the auger blades or chute, always turn the snow thrower off and wait for all moving parts to come to a complete stop. Disconnect the spark plug wire, or for electrics, disconnect the cord.
- Never put your hands inside the auger or chute—use a stick to unclog the snow thrower.
- Wear safety glasses, and avoid any loose-fitting clothing that could get caught in moving parts. Be careful of long hair.
- Do not clear snow across the face of slopes. Use extreme caution when changing direction on slopes. Do not attempt to clear steep slopes.
- Handle gas carefully. Fill up before you start, while the engine is cold. Never smoke around gasoline.